

## HOUSE RESOLUTION 295

By Montgomery

A RESOLUTION to honor the memory of Isaac Dockery.

WHEREAS, it is fitting that the members of this General Assembly should honor the memories of citizens who, during their remarkable lifetimes, distinguished themselves as community leaders of whom we can all be proud; and

WHEREAS, Isaac Dockery was one such estimable person, who constructed Sevierville's oldest brick building, court house, and the first and only Historical African American Church: the New Salem Baptist Church; and

WHEREAS, on May 19, 2012, the New Salem Renovation Task Force Committee will host the "Southern Comfort Food Fest and Silent Auction" to honor Mr. Dockery's life and legacy and to raise funds to restore the New Salem Baptist Church to its former glory; and

WHEREAS, an African American master brick mason and builder, Isaac Dockery was born a freeman in the Jones Cove community of Sevier County; and

WHEREAS, during the Civil War, Mr. Dockery served with acumen and alacrity as a merchant clerk in the home of Henry M. Thomas, where he earned the respect of Mr. Thomas and his clients alike due to the exemplary quality of his work and his attention to detail; and

WHEREAS, an ardent patriot of the highest order, Mr. Isaac Dockery was captured by the Confederate soldiers and dragged through the streets of Sevierville when he refused to reveal the whereabouts of Mr. Thomas's grandson, McKendree Porter Thomas, who was serving his country with honor as a Colonel in the Union Army; and

WHEREAS, Isaac Dockery enjoyed many years of marital bliss with his beloved wife, Charlotte Thomas, and the couple's praise worthy union produced fifteen children; and

WHEREAS, listening to his entrepreneurial spirit, Isaac Dockery decided to forge his own destiny and pursue his dreams, erecting a brick kiln near Middle Creek in the late 1860s and establishing his own brick masonry business; and



WHEREAS, throughout his illustrious career, Mr. Dockery was responsible for constructing the bricks used in several notable Sevierville landmarks, including the Murphy College Building in 1891, the Sevierville Masonic Lodge in 1893, and the Sevier County Courthouse in 1896; and

WHEREAS, originally constructed as a Union Church in 1886, New Salem Baptist Church remains his most significant architectural achievement; and

WHEREAS, listed on the National Register of Historical Places since 2003 and included on the East Tennessee Preservation Alliance's Endangered Heritage List, the New Salem Baptist Church stands as the oldest remaining building in Sevierville; and

WHEREAS, this exquisite house of faith was erected in the Gothic Revival Style and has served as the home of multiple religious denominations and various ethnic groups throughout its storied existence; and

WHEREAS, after living a life filled with courage and conviction, Mr. Dockery went onto his great reward in 1910 and was laid to rest in Pleasant View Cemetery, the public cemetery set aside for African-Americans; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Dockery was wholly committed to the noble precepts of public service that have earned Tennessee recognition as the "Volunteer State," and his legacy should be specially recognized; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES OF THE ONE HUNDRED SEVENTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, that we hereby honor the memory of Isaac Dockery, reflecting upon his vaulted level of success, his dedication to excellence, and his magnificent architectural achievements.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.